

July 1992

Wt 52 grains

this is 72% of ~~wt~~
weight of normal coin of 72 grains

6 sh to Spanish dollar in New Engl

8 sh to Spanish Dollar in NY

this becomes a
New York shilling



$$\frac{12\frac{1}{2} \text{ d}}{16 \text{ d}} = 78\%$$

$$\frac{12\frac{1}{2}}{16\frac{2}{3}} = 75\%$$

12d
Pine Tree
Noe 18

Perfectly round. Normal thickness
Well toned on surfaces
including edges.

Short weight.
White Notches are not
opposite each other but
could be pinch marks from
turning the coin to
trim the outside
edge

could also be caused by
straightening out
bends in coin



Nov 18



Noe 18

h

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

6450 Cecil Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63105

Mr. Richard G. Doty
National Numismatic Collections
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution
Washington D.C. 20560

August 24, 1992

Dear Dick:

Your COAC article led me to do some deep thinking about the two kinks found on some of the Massachusetts silver. I have often wondered about it. Your theory that it could have come from a rocker press stimulated me.

I recently acquired a coin which gave me a new theory I want to try out on you. Here is the description.

Noe 18 Pine Tree Shilling (small size) wt. 52 grains which is 72% of normal. It is just under the silver equal to a New York shilling value. This coin was clearly bent away from the obverse on a line from H of MASSACHUSETTS to the ornament following. It was also bent away from the reverse on a line from L to the N of ANDOM. These bends are distinct from each other. They have no relationship to the position of the obverse or reverse. The coin is perfectly round and of normal thickness. It is well toned everywhere. It was straightened out very early as its toning is uniform on the flattened parts.

I believe the coin might have been kinked by a squeezing clamp on each side used to hold it in a turning rod so that it could be filed smoothly on the rim to steal silver. Then the clamp marks were straightened out by a light hammer blow to put it in circulation again. Only pieces with wide diameters would be selected for this treatment I imagine. Are there other pieces to compare it with. One is pictured in the ANS exhibit.

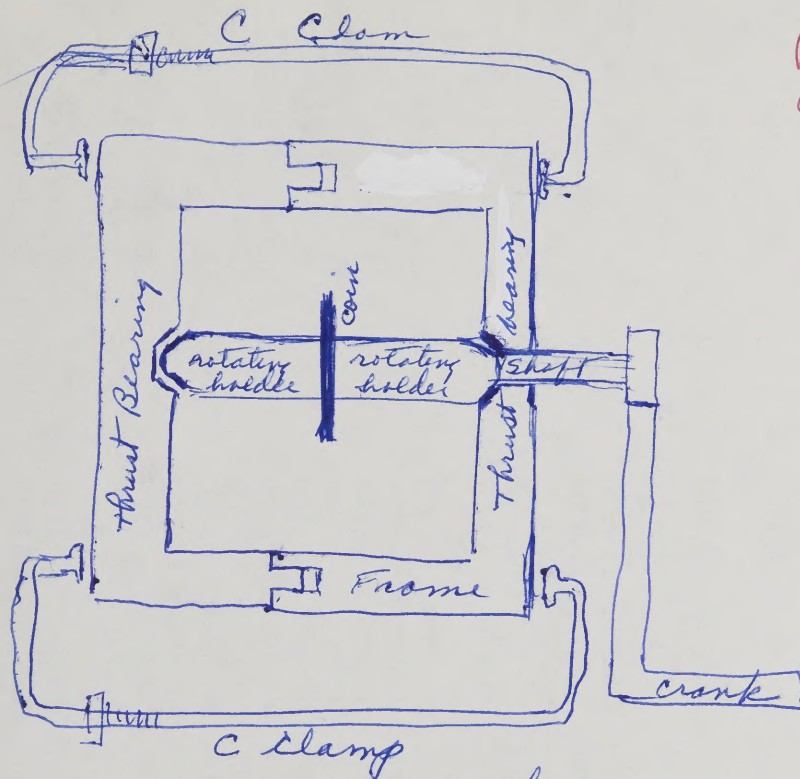
What do you think of this theory. It is like the square hole in Chinese cash so that they could be filed while being turned. That is what gave me the idea.

I enclose photostats of the coin which are pretty clear.

Your comments would be appreciated.

My best,

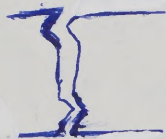
Eric P. Newman



1st
idea

Instead of C Clamps the
frame might fit in a box
but that isn't tight enough
perhaps.

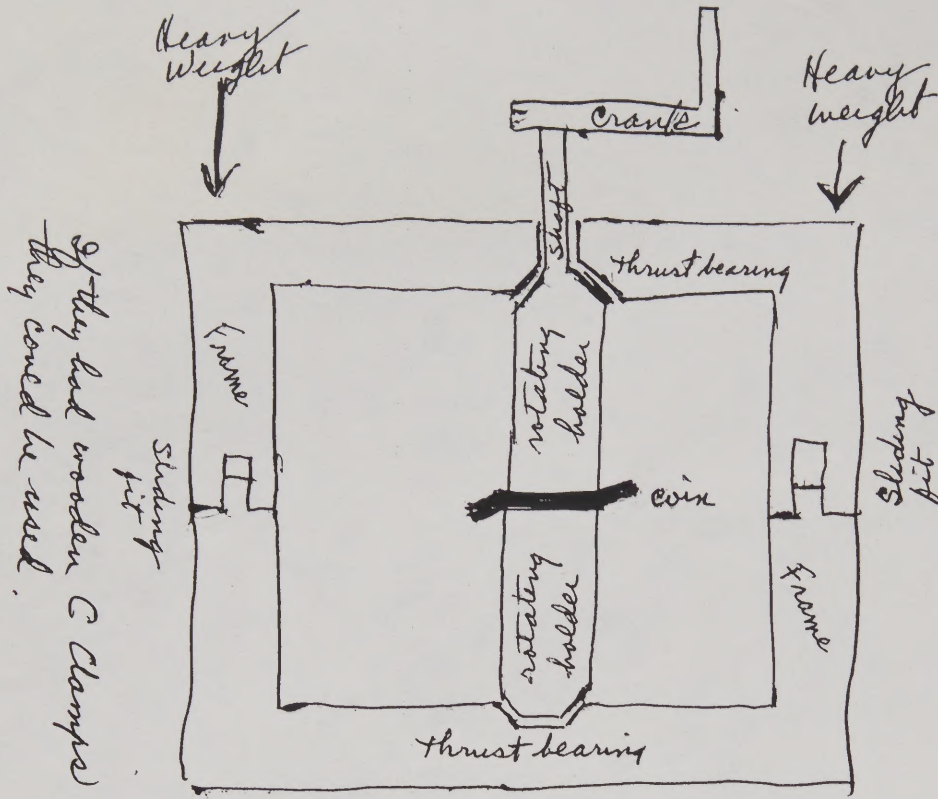
central holder ends could be square shaped



bearing ends
would be round

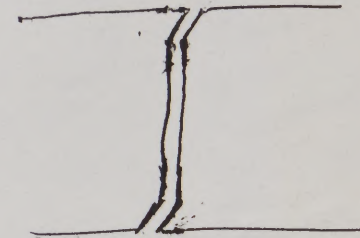
they could be wood or metal

2nd
idea

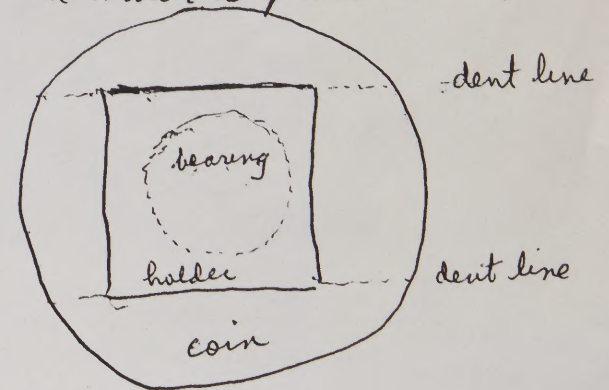


Mechanism for filing edges
off of round coins

Rotary holder
could be square
in section except
it would have
round or conical
or truncated conical
ends. It could be
wood.



Shape of holding ends
in which to place coin.



ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

6450 Cecil Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63105

Walter Breen
c/o Jack Collins
Box 1753
Southgate CA 90280

August 26, 1992

Dear Walter:

I think I may have solved the source of the Massachusetts witch pieces. I recently obtained a Noe 18 Pine Tree shilling weighing only 52 grains (72% of normal). It had been bent in two places, one forward on one side and one forward on the other side. The bends are parallel but not back to back. Both bends were straightened by squeezing or hammering. The coin is round and not clipped unevenly. The natural gray tone on the squeezed part is the same as on all surfaces including the edge. The tops of some letters do not show.

I had seen other pine trees like this and "naturally" had no interest in them because they had been bent, were defective and short weight. These squeeze marks look like large die breaks but they are not.

I began to think of a justification of such action and stirred my witch's pot. My proposed solution is that the kinks were caused by the coin being squeezed into a mechanism which held the coin firmly while the silver was filed off as the coin was turned. After enough silver was removed the coin was hammered flat between wooden blocks so it could pass for full value.

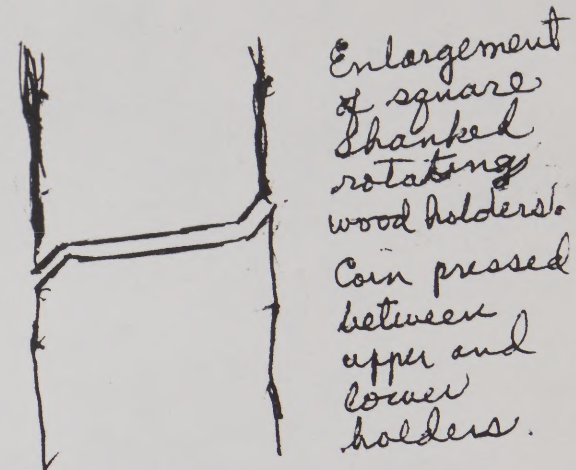
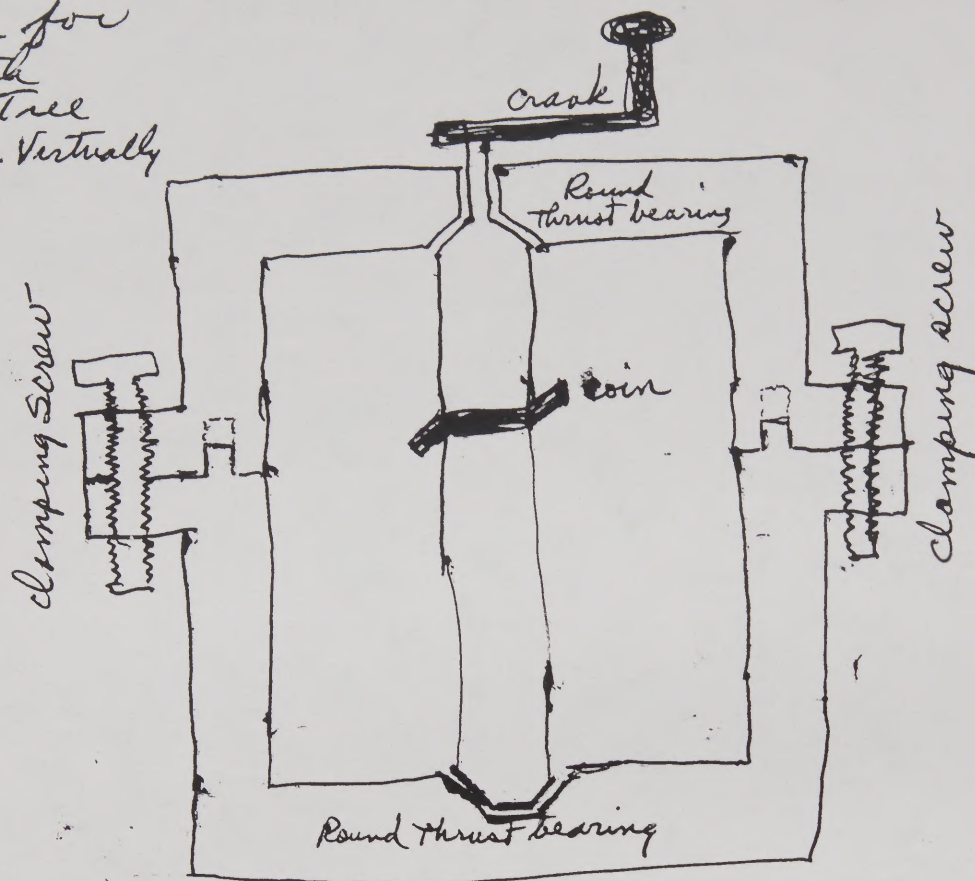
I enclose a photostat of the coin and a drawing I made of the mechanism. I hope this intrigues you. I want your opinion. I hate to wreck the witch story but now it becomes a quick silver stealing story. A quick silver stealing story is not mercury.

Isn't this a crazy theory.

My best,

Eric P. Newman

Justification for
so called witch
pieces in Pine Tree
shilling series. Virtually
all have been
flattened after
silver is stolen.



Enlargement
of square
shanked
rotating
wood holders.
Coin pressed
between
upper and
lower
holders.

Coin extends outside
of holders for easy
filing. Rotated coin
will not slip due
to bent shape.

Suggested mechanism for filing edges
off of round pine tree shillings and
stealing silver. Coin is flattened between
wood blocks after shaving and put back
in circulation.

Please do not publish as I wish
to write this up after further study.
Suggestions are very welcome.

Eue P. Newman Aug 1992

3rd draft of idea









ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

6450 Cecil Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63105

September 3, 1992

Mr. Richard G. Doty
Curator
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560

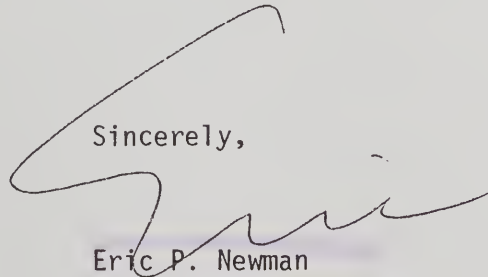
Dear Dick:

Here is my latest reconstruction of the device to hold a coin while
filing off silver.

Whenever you care to comment, I look forward to it. This is entirely
distinct from your rocker press findings, but your findings stimulated
it.

Thanks,

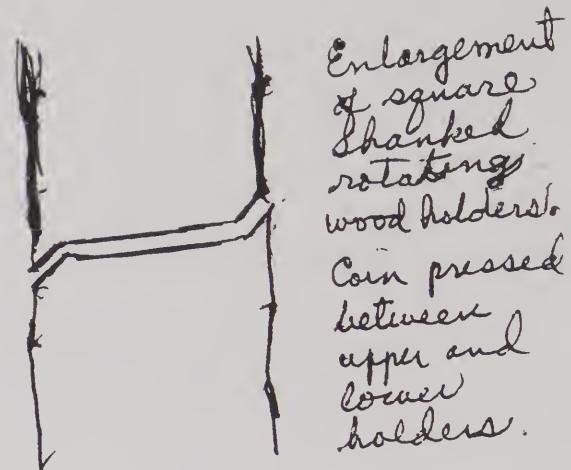
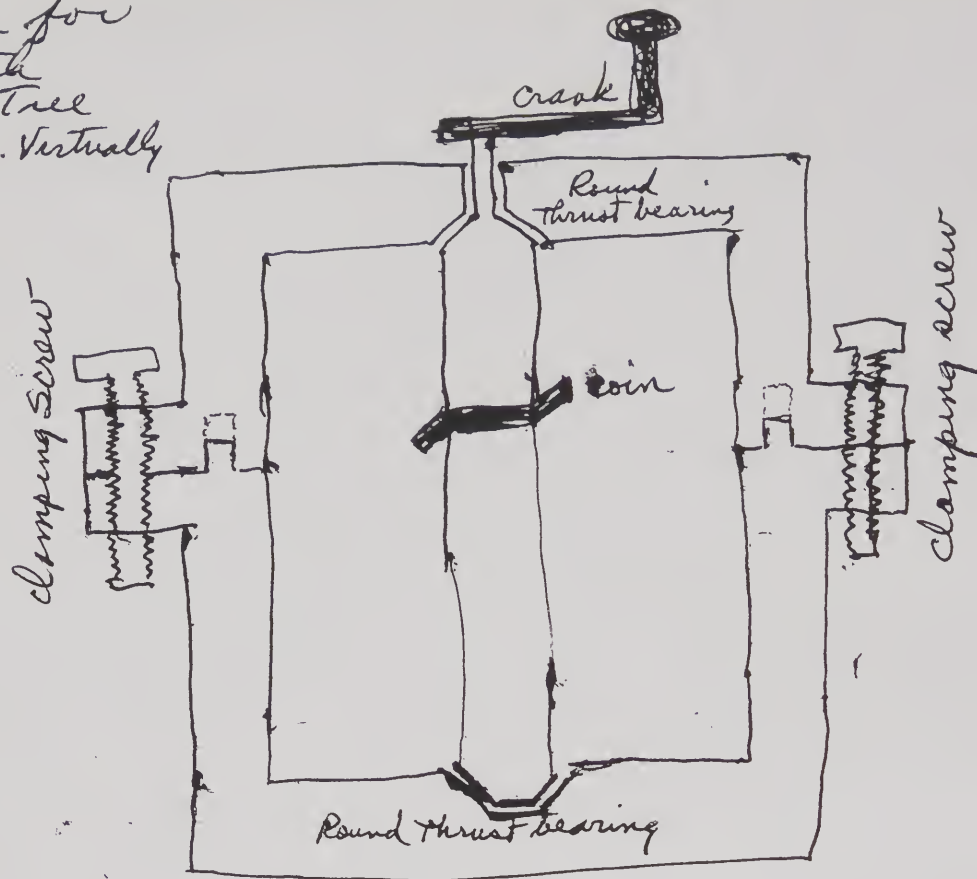
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Eric P. Newman', with a large, sweeping initial 'E'.

Eric P. Newman

EPN:bv

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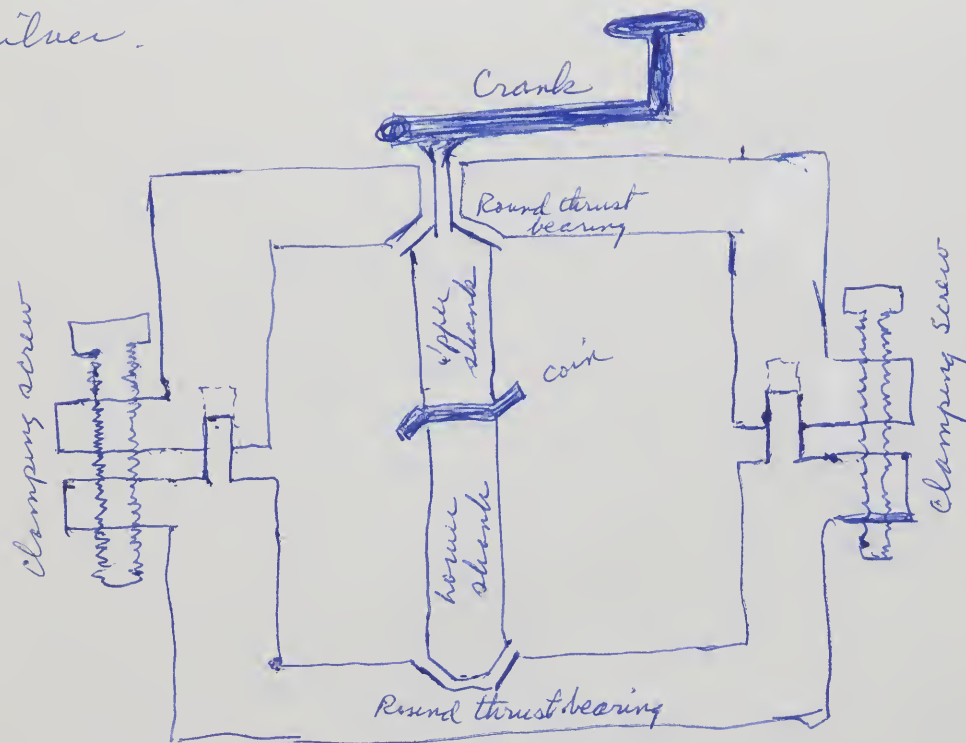
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Eve P. Newman Aug 1992

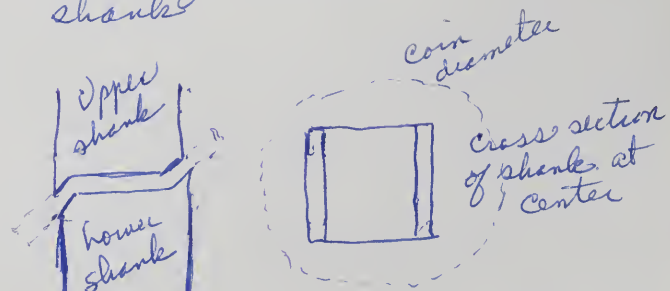
theory for
creation of witch
pieces to steal
silver.



Coin is tightened between shanks causing bends at opposite sides. Crank turns shank so coin can be filed off uniformly around the edge. Coin is flattened after shaving and put in circulation again.

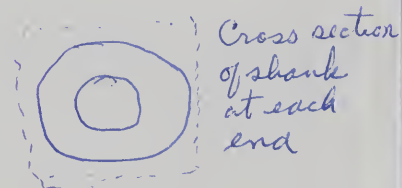
4th draft

Detail of holding shank



Clamping screws are tightened until shank parts are squeezed firmly. Frame locks.

Coin pressed between upper & lower shank to hold it for filing while being turned. Coin will not slip if pinched as indicated.



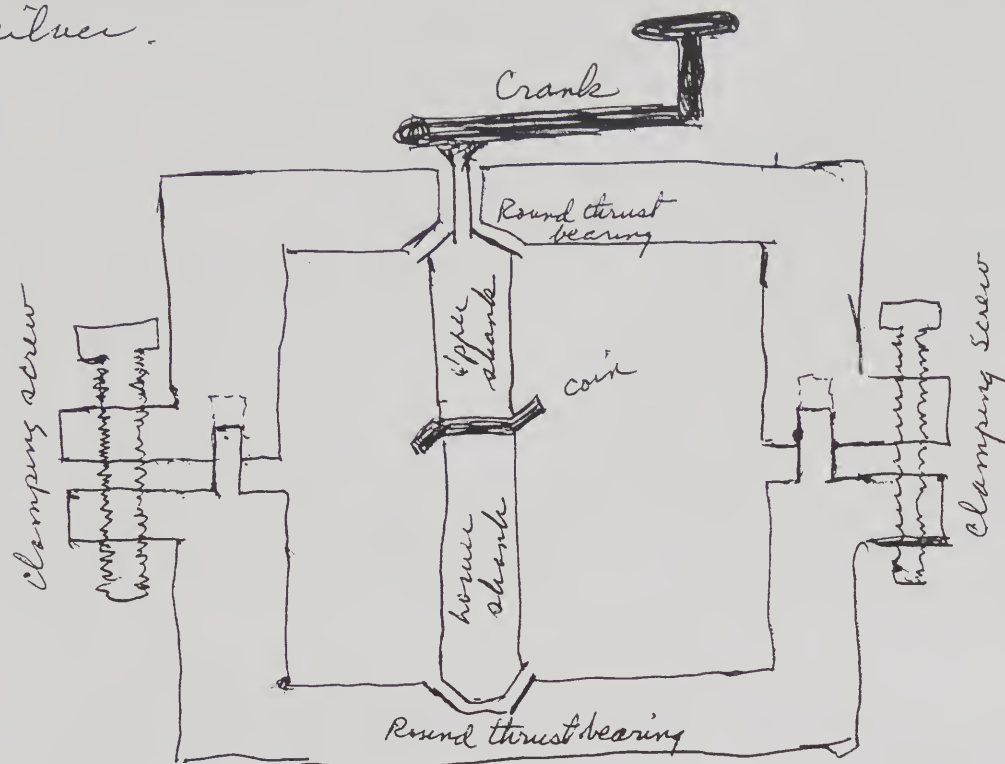
Matter under consideration.

Do not publish.

Emil Newman Sept 1892

Suggestions are welcome

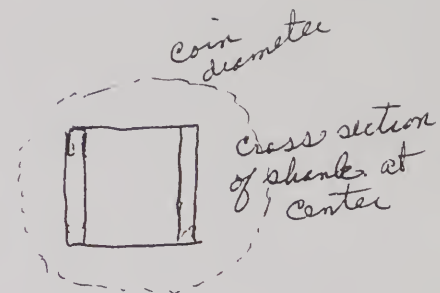
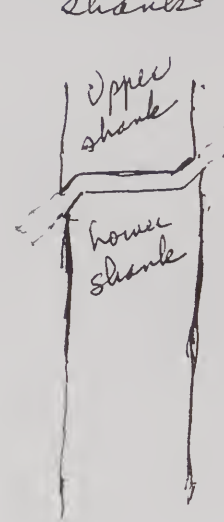
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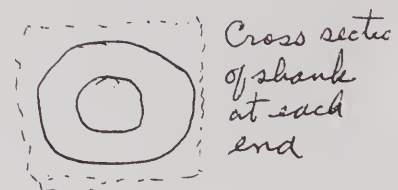
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Detail of holding
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Matter under consideration.

Do not publish.

Emp Newman Sept 1892

Suggestions are welcome



- 5504 1652 Massachusetts Bay Colony. Pine Tree shilling. N-2. VF-30. 72.2 grains. An attractive, pale gray example of this large planchet variety. Full obverse tree and root structure, somewhat weak at the lower left. Nearly full obverse legend, TS INM partially off flan. Well struck and centered reverse, just the tops of OM NEW off flan. Full weight for this denomination. A very nice example for inclusion in a type collection.

Noe-8 Pine Tree Shilling Technically Important Specimen



- 5505 1652 Massachusetts Bay Colony. Pine Tree shilling. N-8. VF-20, or finer. 61.2 grains. Two pronounced planchet bends, horizontal across the flan. Pleasing pale gray and golden brown on both sides, the surfaces glossy. Some planchet pitting visible, primarily on the reverse. Common state, the die failing below GL and between OM on reverse. An interesting coin, important from a technical point of view, and a nice addition to a specialist's cabinet.

The wavy "S" bends visible on this planchet have traditionally been catalogued as evidence of a "witch piece." According to the story, Massachusetts silver shillings were bent to ward off the influence of witches. There is no contemporary written evidence for this practice.

An alternative explanation for the "S" bends is that they are artifacts left behind on the flan from the manufacturing process. This has been speculated upon before, notably in this writer's Michael Hodder's description of the Massachusetts silver coins from the Norweb Collection. The "S" bends visible on this piece are identical to those seen on plates II & III of Charles Wilson Peck's *English Copper, Tin and Bronze Coins in the British Museum, 1558-1958*, copper strips of roller die coined Charles I. farthings. The placement of the bends, at the top and bottom of each coined flan, are identical when compared. These "S" bends were also left behind on flans coined in the reciprocating Taschenwerke press, a very simple, easily constructed, and mechanically reliable coming press which would have required very little capital investment. Such a press can be seen in Denis R. Cooper's *The Art and Craft of Coin Making, A History of Minting Technology*, pp. 61-71. The beveled edge visible on this piece at the bottom of the obverse and top of the reverse are further evidence for a Taschenwerke press.

The question of the technology employed to mint Massachusetts silver coins, from the NE issues through the small planchet Pine Tree type, has not been studied in depth since Noe's work. It appears to the present writer that several different types of presses were used in the Boston mint 1652-1684, including, but not necessarily limited to, simple punches, Noe's so-called "personal dies," reciprocating rocker mills (Taschenwerke), and the commonly believed screw press. More careful attention to the physical appearances of Massachusetts silver coins, and their accurate recording, might help in resolving this important and fascinating question.



- 5506 1652 Massachusetts Bay Colony. Pine Tree shilling. N-30. VF-30. 70.3 grains. Softly struck at the tops of the obverse and reverse. Pale silver gray on both sides. Full tree, top a little soft. Both sides fairly well centered.

Said by the consignor to be ex H. Chapman's sale of the Earle Collection (June 1912), but does not correspond to any of the specimens plated in that catalogue.



- 5507 1652 Massachusetts Bay Colony. Pine Tree sixpence. N-33. P-15. 50.7 grains. Reverse struck off center, as usual on the combination. Deep silver gray and golden brown.

The constant off centering of the reverse on N-33 can easily be explained by the tandem rotation two sets of roller dies exactly above each other, as well as a failure to position dies in a screw press. However, whatever technology was employed, it must be assumed that the entire run of N-33 was coined from one die pair set up. In other words, the dies used to coin N-33 which remained constantly and identically out of alignment, as seen on all specimens, and from them could not have been removed from the press, and the entire issue had been struck. Otherwise, examples of N-33 would be known with differing degrees of misalignment, and experience shows that this is not the case.

- 5508 [1688] American Plantations or Holt token. AU-50, with considerable mint lustre remaining in the protected areas of the obverse and reverse. Heavy tinpest on both sides, rather typical of the issue.



- 5509 1722 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Harp Left. AU-55, or finer. 10.40 grains. Pale golden tan on both sides, with a few areas of darker toning visible. Struck from a late state of the obverse, the die rusted and broken below George I's bust.



- 5510 1723 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Stop before H. MS-64, red and brown. Obverse verdigris spot on curl; reverse rim clipped, but as made. 113.1 grains.

- 5511 1723 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Stops after X and 3. MS-60. Variety with double punched 3 in date. Struck from rusted dies, on a severely flawed flan, quite unusual for the issue. 110.0 grains.



- 5512 1723 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Without stop before H. MS-60, a nice olive-brown example. Small patch of discoloration at the top of the reverse. 130.7 grains.

- 5513 1723 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Stops after X and 3. AU-55, olive-brown, verdigris on reverse. 3 in date double punched. A second example of this variety.

- 5514 1723 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Stops after X and 3. AU-50. Breen-159, the so-called "beaded cincture" variety. Called "rare" by Breen. Nice olive-brown. Planchet flaw on eyebrow. 113.0 grains.



KENNETH BRESSETT
POST OFFICE BOX 60145
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80960

September 2, 1992

Mr. Eric P. Newman
6450 Cecil Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63105

Dear Eric,

Thanks for sharing this latest problem with me. I have been thinking about the way Massachusetts silver coins were made for a long time. We may have even discussed this at one time in the past. I believe that three different techniques were used to make these coins.

It seems certain that the NE and Willow pieces were struck with hand held dies. It also seems likely (to me) that the small, thick planchet Pine Tree pieces were made on a screw press. It is only the Oak and early Pine pieces that are a problem. I have long thought that they were made with a rocker press, similar to what Doty calls a "sway" press.

This theory is based on the characteristic bend seen on so many of these coins. I believe that Doty is correct in his analysis of how they were made. I also believe that those with the unrelated "witch bend" were made as charms, as I have seen many European coins with that same bend.

Your suggestion about a coin clipping device does not seem reasonable to me for several reasons, and I do not think that your Noe 18 coin is like the Oak and large size Pine bends. I think it is just bent!

1) Your theory involves an elaborate device that would be limited to perhaps one person. Surely all of the clipped Mass silver coins could not have been made at one factory.

2) I have seen uncirculated Oak and Pine coins with the bend. It is also there on many non-clipped coins.

3) A simple vice would work just as well if someone wanted to hold coins while clipping or filing them.

agreed

*all were
holed
when used
as decorative charms*

*Feel that for
stealing on
a large basis
a device was
worthwhile
Not a side
hand*

*the file would
bend the coins
the squeeze would
be in the middle
in a vice.*

those were production bends

4) The bend on Oak and large Pine coins is uniform in style and position. That would not happen in coins were put in a holding device and filed.

agree
agree I just can't accept your complicated theory about a special kind of clamp being used to hold a coin while it was filed. I do not think that the bend in your coin is related to the sway press bend in any way. I just think that your coin was struck on a screw press, clipped, filed and bent later, and then worn in normal circulation.

On different topics:

Thanks for sending the Breen citation. I am very much in favor of this. Michael Hodder was a little reluctant to call him such great scholar, but he did want to be included in the tribute. I gave the piece to Barb Gregory. She will use it as a Letter to the Editor in *The Numismatist*.

I don't think I ever thanked you for sending me all of that information about the Bar tokens. All very interesting. Your package arrived just before I left for the Orlando show, and I haven't had a chance to do anything with it yet. It is all very much appreciated.

Good to see you if only for a short visit at the show. Those things are always so busy for everyone. I had fun, but was sorry to miss the Rittenhouse breakfast this year.

Sincerely,



EARLY AMERICAN COINS

MASSACHUSETTS SILVER COINS

- 187 **1652 Oak Tree shilling.** Noe-1. 69.5 grains. Very Fine. Even, light silver gray on both sides. Full tree save for extremity of leftmost branch, full roots; complete date and denomination. Obverse legend tight on flan at upper right; reverse legend full everywhere, DO faint due to die failure. Reverse die state as described by Richard Picker in his *Variations of the Die Varieties of the Massachusetts Oak and Pine Tree Coinage* (1976). \$825.00

TERMINAL STATE NOE-7



No. 188

- 188 **1652 Oak Tree shilling.** N.7. 70.7 gns. Extremely Fine, with lovely, deep gray toning on both sides. Very sharp and attractive reverse, full denomination and date, complete legend; typically soft obverse, due to the exceptionally late state of the reverse die, partially legible legend, very faint tree. **Terminal reverse state:** equivalent to Noe's state H and Norweb:1164, the die heavily failing in lower right field. This state **very rare** and infrequently seen. Distinct evidence of reverse lapping visible, the die state actually later than the Norweb coin's (note breaks over stop and second A, below curve of 5) but third N re-cut and now resembles an M! \$2,500.00

Ex Virgil M. Brand Collection.

"TRANSITIONAL" OAK TREE SHILLING

- 189 **1652 Oak Tree shilling.** N.14. The "Spiny Tree" transitional variety popularly known as the "oak that got changed into a pine." 70.9 gns. Very Fine, medium silver gray in color. Full tree, typical obverse centering leaving tops of IN M off flan; perfectly centered reverse, full denomination, date, and legend. Small planchet dig below first T on obverse, as made. Distinct "S" bend in the flan and elongated denticles at top of obverse, also seen on Norweb:1173 and evidence of the type of coining press in use at the time. \$2,850.00

OUTSTANDING N.28 OAK TREE THREEPENCE



No. 190

- 190 **1652 Oak Tree Threepence.** N.28. 16.2 gns. Very Choice About Uncirculated. Exceptional color, a deep gunmetal blue and gray. Obverse slightly off center to the bottom, as often seen; reverse perfectly centered. Legend at base of obverse indistinct due to severe die clash there; reverse legend very sharp everywhere save at EN. Full, sharp tree and roots; full denomination and date. Die states later than Norweb:1183, Garrett:1211, and the Noe plate coin (ex T. James Clarke Collection). This specimen is finer than those three and may be in the Condition Census for the variety. \$3,250.00

- 191 **1652 Oak Tree Threepence.** N.28. Another. 17.9 gns. Overall Fine, reverse sharpness of Very Fine in places. Light gray in color. Full tree and roots, denomination and date. Partial legends both sides. Die states and centering about as the preceding's. \$2,250.00
- 192 **1662 Oak Tree Twopence.** N.30. 11.4 gns. Very Fine. Light silver gray in color. Full tree and roots, denomination and date. Both legends clear and fully legible. Obverse off center to the bottom, as usually seen (Norweb, Roper, Picker coins, for examples). Planchet surface somewhat "wavy", as made. The only Massachusetts silver issue dated this year. \$1,750.00
- 193 **1652 Pine Tree Shilling.** Large planchet. N.1. 66.1 gns. Very Fine overall. Pale silver gray in color. Several straight edge clips, but given the near full weight of this piece these were probably done at Hull's mint to bring the weight down to the standard. Full tree and roots, just the topmost branches soft; full denomination and date. Obverse slightly off center to the bottom, as also seen on the Norweb example, some letters illegible; reverse perfectly centered, tops of M N off flan due to clipping. Die states later than the Noe plate coin and Norweb:1191, slightly earlier than Garrett:1214, the break at [A]N not as advanced. Slight elongation of denticles at top of obverse but faint clash visible below roots from XI of denomination. \$2,500.00

There are clear signs in the planchet of the "S" bend that have been taken as evidence of the use of a rocker press to coin the Noe-1 large planchet pines. However, many examples of this variety also show signs of die clashing. Since rocker press dies cannot clash, and since rocker and screw press dies are not interchangeable, the "S" bends may be indicative of something other than what has been conjectured for them.

RARE NOE 4.5 PINE TREE SHILLING



No. 194

- 194 **1652 Pine Tree Shilling.** Large planchet. N.4.5. **High Rarity 7.** 69.9 gns. Overall Extremely Fine. Even, rich silver gray on both sides. Full tree, roots, denomination and date. Full legends on both sides. Pronounced "S" bend in the planchet, very typical for the variety. **Rare** intermediate states of the obverse and reverse dies: these were first described by John Ford in New Netherlands' 60th Sale (lot 213). That description was based upon a single specimen and included observations of features the result of the minting equipment used. They were not entirely applicable to all examples of N.4.5, therefore. The single most useful diagnostic is the shape of the crossbar on the first T, which is attenuated in the center where it meets the downstroke. Compare this to Norweb:1194 and Garrett:1217, both examples of Noe 4. As expected, the reverse state of this piece is later than seen on Noe 4, with the breaks in left field more advanced. The failure above M appears to have pre-dated the field breaks. This intermediate state variety was missing from the Norweb and Garrett sales; this piece nicer than the NN 60th specimen. The variety was published by Richard Picker in *Studies on Money in Early America*. The reverses of Noe 4-6, 9-10 are all successively reworked states of the same die. \$5,250.00

FIXED PRICE LIST

FALL 1992

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Noe-8 Pine Tree Shilling Technically Important Specimen



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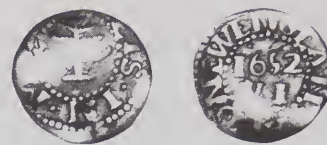
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- 5506 1652 Massachusetts Bay Colony. Pine Tree shilling. N-30. VF-30. 70.3 grains. Softly struck at the tops of the obverse and reverse. Pale silver gray on both sides. Full tree, top a little soft. Both sides fairly well centered.

Said by the consignor to be ex H. Chapman's sale of the Earle Collection (June 1912), but does not correspond to any of the specimens plated in that catalogue.



- 5507 1652 Massachusetts Bay Colony. Pine Tree sixpence. N-33. 51.5 grains. Reverse struck off center, as usual on the combination. Deep silver gray and golden brown.

The constant off-centering of the reverse on N-33 can easily be explained by the fact that it was from two sets of roller dies exactly above each other, as well as a lathe-turned, rather than a screw press. However, whatever technology was employed, it must be assumed that the die pair run of N-33 was coined from one die pair set up. In other words, the dies used to coin N-33 which remained constantly and identically in perfect alignment, as seen on all specimens struck from them, could not have been removed from the press until the entire issue had been struck. Otherwise, examples of N-33 would be known with differing degrees of misalignment, and experience shows that this is not the case.

- 5508 [1688] American Plantations or Holt token. AU-50, with considerable mint lustre remaining in the protected areas of the obverse and reverse. Heavy tinpest on both sides, rather typical of the issue.



- 5509 1722 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Harp Left. AU-55, or finer. 129.2 grains. Pale golden tan on both sides, with a few areas of darker toning visible. Struck from a late state of the obverse, the die rusted and broken below George I's bust.



- 5510 1723 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Stop before H. MS-64, red and brown. Obverse verdigris spot on curl; reverse rim clipped, but as made. 113.1 grains.

- 5511 1723 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Stops after X and 3. MS-60. Variety with double punched 3 in date. Struck from rusted dies, on a severely flawed flan, quite unusual for the issue. 110.0 grains.



- 5512 1723 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Without stop before H. MS-60, a nice olive-brown example. Small patch of discoloration at the top of the reverse. 130.7 grains.

- 5513 1723 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Stops after X and 3. AU-55, olive-brown, verdigris on reverse. 3 in date double punched. A second example of this variety.

- 5514 1723 Wood's Hibernia halfpenny. Stops after X and 3. AU-50. Breen-159, the so-called "beaded cincture" variety. Called "rare" by Breen. Nice olive-brown. Planchet flaw on eyebrow. 113.0 grains.

HOARDS

There are two hoards which are recorded with some degree of dependability. The first was found in Roxbury in 1863. This hoard contained twenty-eight pieces and was acquired intact by W. Elliot Woodward, a Boston coin-dealer. It was described in his catalogue of the McCoy Collection (1864, lot 1640) and offered as a single lot with an upset price of \$150.00 and withdrawn in the absence of a bid. In his next sale, the following year, the coins were offered without restriction and brought a total which was close to one hundred dollars. Had the hoard been preserved intact, helpful deductions would have been possible in all probability. An account of the finding was printed in *The Historical Magazine* for October, 1863, from which the following is taken:

"A few weeks since Geo. Wilber Reed, a little son of Geo. P. Reed, Esq., of this city, when climbing up a bank, through which a new street had recently been cut, to aid his ascent put his hand into a crevice by the side of a rock; on withdrawing his hand his attention was attracted by a piece of metal, which on examination he found to be a Pine Tree Shilling, with two other coins adhering. The boy of course continued "prospect-ing" until the "lead" was exhausted, and at the conclusion of his digging was rewarded by finding in his possession no less than twenty-eight pieces, comprising all the denominations of the Pine Tree money, all of the common types with a single exception.

"..... That the coins were not lost prior to 1662 is proved by the fact that several two-penny pieces of that date were found amongst them, while the fine condition of the pieces,

coupled with the circumstances that no Spanish or other coins were with them, indicate that they were lost when the Mint was in its palmy days, and when the Pine Tree money was almost or quite the only currency in circulation in New England, say, between 1662 and 1685."

In this hoard, sixteen coins were Oak and twelve Pine Tree issues. We are able to identify one of the Pine Tree shillings (our No. 11), and possibly a second (No. 3?). At least one of the remaining shillings was of the small-flan type — possibly all four — the insufficient description prevents certainty. But the presence of the one small-flan shilling enables us to date the burial of the hoard after the small-flan came into use, after about 1675. Were we able to identify the other varieties, we might be able to tell from them whether the loss of these coins took place immediately after the change to the small form or nearer to the cessation of the coinage in 1682.

The second hoard was found at Castine on the coast of Maine in 1840. It was initially studied by Mr. Joseph Williamson.¹ A re-study of this hoard² was one of the results of the loan of this material for an exhibition held in the Museum of the American Numismatic Society in 1942.

The hoard is reported to have contained between four and five hundred pieces. The Massachusetts issues were said to have numbered thirty in one account and fifty to seventy-five in another description of this hoard. Fortunately, a selection of what purported to be one of each several variety contained in the hoard was made by Dr. Joseph L. Stevens of Castine, and this selection of seventeen pieces came ultimately into possession of the Maine Historical Society. There are four Pine Tree varieties. The date deduced for the burial of the

¹ *Collections of the Maine Historical Society*, Vol. VI, 1859, pp. 107-126.

² S. P. Noe, *The Castine Deposit: An American Hoard* (Numismatic Notes and Monographs 100).

deposit was about 1704. The three Pine Tree shillings are our Nos. 2, 25 and 29; there was also a sixpence. Specimens said to be from this hoard occur in auction sale catalogues,³ an indication of the possibility that more of these pieces than we think escaped the melting pot.

At Exeter in October, 1876, a hoard said to have contained thirty to forty Massachusetts shillings was found. A brief paragraph appeared in the *American Journal of Numismatics* for 1877 (p. 92), and a much more detailed account in the same publication for 1878 (p. 105) is signed C.H.B., probably C. H. Betts. Since many of our readers will not have this reference available, two pertinent paragraphs are appended.

"It was in the process of excavating a cellar under the extension of a store, not far from the railroad station, in Exeter, that the discovery of the coins was made. The Proprietor had given the earth to an Irish laborer, upon the condition that he would take it away. In throwing the sand into a cart, a few of the shillings were disclosed, though their value was not at once realized. The person to whom the earth was given, however, thought it worth his while to examine further the argentiferous soil before "dumping" it, and finally passed it through a sieve, realizing by the process quite a store of the pine-tree pieces. The exact number obtained in all cannot be ascertained, but is believed to be between thirty and forty. The greater part were found by the Irishman, but other persons picked up scattering specimens.

"The remains of what appeared to be a wooden box, much decayed, were detected in the sand; the coins in all probability had been inclosed in it. All the pieces found were shillings of the oak or pine-tree pattern, and bearing the date, of course,

³ Oak Tree Shilling, Woodward Sale, Mar. 30, 1864, Lot 138 and Pine Tree Shillings, Woodward Sale, Apr. 28, 1863, Lots 1870, 1871, 1873 (small flan) and sale of Oct. 20, 1863, Lots 2460, 2467 (6-κ).

of 1652. They were of several varieties, giving evidence, according to an intelligent informant, of at least four distinct dies. The condition of the pieces varied, some being, fine, while others were much worn. The place of deposit has been used as a garden, or door yard, probably, for a couple of centuries. When, by whom, and for what reason the glittering hoard was interred there, must be left to conjecture."

We do not have any detailed record of the contents of this find, but in the Ferguson Haines Sale of October, 1880, there is a statement that the Willow Tree shilling, No. 11 in N. N. & M., No. 102, came from this source.

From Salem in 1737, comes a newspaper report of a find which bears all the marks of gross exaggeration. It was called to my attention by Mr. Chauncey C. Nash who kindly made inquiries in Salem without being able to obtain further information. The paragraph quoted by him comes from the *Salem Gazette* for July 11/18, 1737. A similarly worded paragraph (with minor differences) appears in the *American Journal of Numismatics* for 1881 (p. 46) and is repeated (without original spellings) in the same Journal for 1890 (p. 31) with credit to the *Boston Weekly News-Letter* of July 21st, 1737. Although little more than a statement of place and circumstance is to be gained from this paragraph, it is reprinted below:

"We hear from Salem, that on Friday last William Brown, Esq., the youngest surviving Son of Hon. Col. Brown, deceased, having had Information of some Money conceal'd in a Place which he owned, caused search to be made for the same, where was found five or six Jarrs full of Silver, containing about one thousand ninety-three Ounces of Silver of several Species, among which was about six thousand New-England Shillings, scarcely discolor'd." *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, July 21, 1737.

Coming from Boothbay Harbor, thirteen miles southeast of Bath, Maine, sometime before September, 1880, a small lot of "Pine Tree" pieces which might have been a part of a hoard is recorded in the Woodward Sale of the Jenks Collection (Sept. 1880), lots 429 to 431. The fifth piece appeared in Woodward's Sale of his own collection (1884, lot 354). The earlier sale under a caption "Treasure Trove" states "the four following pieces were found, quite recently, in a small cave in Boothbay Harbor, Maine. The entire find consisted of five pieces, and the finder, hoping to secure more, very judiciously keeps secret the exact place of discovery." The entry for the piece in the 1884 sale reads: "1652 Oak-tree Shilling. Found in a little cave with a number of others at Boothbay, Me., where it had lain long under salt water, the action of which reduced its weight nearly one-half. Piece broken from edge." There is little to be learned from the foregoing save that there were two Oak Tree shillings, and that one of the three Pine Tree shillings was a small-flan variety. Assuming that a hoard is represented by these five pieces, it would have been deposited after about 1675.

WITCH PIECES

One of the tragic episodes in the early history of the Bay Colony — the witch frenzy — has an indirect bearing on the coinage we have been studying. A wave of hysteria seems to have swept over the colonists in 1692, centering in Salem although Boston was not unaffected. The cruel punishments after trials that were grossly unjust still bring amazement to anyone who examines the carefully kept records. The epidemic was not confined to the ignorant or illiterate. Cotton Mather attended one of the trials and spoke in justification of the verdict. He also made his opinion clear in print. Judge Samuel Sewall, later Chief Justice, twenty years after made a public confession of penitence for his judicial acts.¹

We are told that it was the superstitious belief of the time that wearing a bent coin afforded protection against the power of "witches." Some of our Pine Tree coins show evidence of having once been bent even though as we see them now they have again been flattened. Some show dents which imply that teeth must have been the means of bending them initially. The thinness of the Pine Tree coins made bending an easy operation, and some with holes for suspension may have seen service in the same manner as those which were bent. The Roxbury hoard contained one piece which was described as a witch piece. On PLATE VI, a-c, a selection of pieces which are believed to have served as witch pieces are shown.²

¹ *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, Fifth Ser., V, Boston, 1878, I, 445.

² It may have been a "witch piece" that we find mentioned in "Mother Goose":

There was a crooked man
And he walked a crooked mile
He found a crooked sixpence
Against a crooked stile.

that some of the engraving was done by apprentices. The errors in spelling occur rather late (Nos. 11 and 12, obverses), but the uniform spelling MASATHVSETS, with these exceptions, gives some authority to this as an official spelling, notwithstanding the multiplicity of variations which occur in documents, and sometimes in the same document.

The frequency with which we find reversed S's, and N's which have the middle stroke incorrectly cut, shows that either a novice or a careless workman was responsible. ANNO was usually abbreviated to AN, but in the Pine Tree threepences we find ANO. Further we find it omitted in one instance (PLATE V, 34) and then added to a second state of the die with a readjustment of the adjacent letters to equalize the spacing (PLATE V, 35). If the forthrightness which characterizes Hull's letters found vent after the disclosure of such inadvertencies, there must have been times when the mint-house echoed to forceful language.

It must not be thought, however, that such mistakes were common. After mastering the difficulties which made the Willow Tree pieces such poor coins, the inscriptions are exceptional in their excellence, and need no apologist. It is doubtful that anything would be gained through trying to differentiate the workmanship of this or that engraver. The silverware bearing the punches of Hull and Sanderson show little lettered engraving that is not obviously a later addition. For the purpose of establishing the sequence, the numismatic approach through die-combinations and die-breaks is relatively much more dependable.

MUTILATIONS

One of the reasons given in the records for the change from the NE type to that with "a tree" was the ease with which the NE pieces could be clipped. This may have been foreseeing a condition which had not yet come to pass, but it is strange that no clipped NE coins have come under my observation. Clipped or underweight specimens of the following varieties have been noted and a selection is shown on PLATE V.

			<i>Weight</i>
Willow	No. 19	American Numismatic Society	53.4
Oak	No. 5	Mass. Historical Society	43.4
"	No. 1	" " "	48.8 Pl. V, a
Pine	No. 8	T. James Clarke	36.3
"	No. 2	C. Wurtzbach	64.4
"	No. 9	Yale University	46.6 Pl. V, e
"	No. 13	Amer. Numismatic Society (Field)	52.1 Pl. VI, c
"	No. 1	" " " "	44.0
"	No. 1	William L. Clark	37.1 Pl. V, f
"	No. 30		
"	No. 26	Mass. Historical Society	30.4 Pl. V, d
"	No. 17	" " "	42.2
"	No. 2	American Numismatic Society	73.3
"	No. 4	Mass. Historical Society	74.4
"	No. 15	T. James Clarke	74.1

There are other pieces which seem to have been clipped, but which the scales show to be of normal weight. Some pieces have lost a few grains only and these can hardly have suffered this loss by clipping. In addition, we are fortunate in having a

clipping from an Oak Tree shilling. This comes from a hoard of clippings found in London. The letters permit identifying it as our No. 1. In some cases, as in this one, clipping has taken the form of removing a segment (PLATE V, c). Others have had a ring of metal removed (Cf. PLATE XI, a, b),¹ and this procedure is a less obvious reduction of the coin's value. Both large and small flan issues have suffered from this practice, but the larger flan pieces which had undergone circular clipping would have been more easily passed after the small-flan Pine Tree pieces had come into being. A further form of mutilation has been published by H. Alexander Parsons.² This is a quartering of a Pine Tree shilling (PLATE V, b) which probably occurred in the Leeward Islands of the West Indies where this means of obtaining small denominations for circulation more frequently used Mexican or other coins of Latin America. It is interesting that Mr. Howland Wood whose interest in cut pieces is commemorated in his indispensable monograph on these mutilations, concurred in this explanation. The halved piece from the collection of The Massachusetts Historical Society (No. 26 — PLATE V, d) may be another instance of this practice although it may also have been the result of a coin having been bent for wear as a witch piece and broken in the process.

Overweight is rare and is sometimes a valuable hint that the genuineness of a coin is questionable. All weights above the norm recorded have been for Pine Trees.

¹ Pieces illustrated are: (a) clipping of a shilling of Charles I and (b) clipping of a groat of Henry VI.

² "A Cut New England Threepence Attributed to the Leeward Islands," *British Numismatic Journal*, XV (1919-1920), p. 225.

COMMENTS ON FABRICATIONS

From the space devoted to counterfeits and imitations herein, they may appear to have been given undue prominence, but because some of these fabrications may be dated within fairly close limits and also because the copies are frequently mistaken for the genuine pieces by the uninitiated who have no originals with which to compare them, they are listed with more detail than they deserve.

A, B and C. These pieces are to be dated before 1854 on the evidence of Dr. Ammi Brown's letter.¹ The spelling MASSACHUSETTS implies that the engraver did not have a genuine piece before him. Moreover, the date shows that the intention must have been either to mystify or to take advantage of the ignorance of some novice.

The source of B and C was the same as for A, and because these pieces betray a knowledge of the Bay Colony's coinage, which, though hardly to be called thorough or competent could not be stigmatized as superficial, we may draw some conclusions from what was selected for imitation. Their fabricator was not concerned with the Oak Tree issues. He was working at a time when Crosby's demonstration that the Oak Tree type preceded the Pine Tree had not yet been published. It seems scarcely credible that the very slight evidence that a coinage was being considered by the officials of the colony before 1652, on the basis of which Crosby and others were willing to give these pieces a hearing, could have been known to the originator. He did not know that the small-flan Pine Tree pieces were the latest in the coinage, but the

¹ *Early Coins of America*, p. 63.



SHILLINGS



SIXPENCE (32-33a) THREEPENCE (34-37)
MUTILATIONS (a-f)

VI



WITCH PIECES (a-c) DIE DAMAGE (d-h)

VII



FABRICATIONS AND IMITATIONS